

# Connecticut After School Network

Testimony to the Education Committee  
In Support of After School Programs  
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Good afternoon, Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann, and members of the Education Committee. My name is Michelle Doucette Cunningham, and I am the Executive Director of the Connecticut After School Network, a statewide alliance representing the thousands of children, parents and staff who participate in after school and summer programs all across the state.

I am here today, on behalf of the more than 5,000 children and their families that benefit from the state-funded After School Grant Program in the State Department of Education budget, to oppose section 27 of Governor's HB 6357 which would repeal C.G.S. §10-16x, the law that establishes the After School Grant program within the State Department of Education. This is the law that oversees the \$4.5 million line item which was entirely eliminated in the Governor's proposal. This program is essential and without it thousands of children and families will be without the after school programs they depend upon.

After school programs in §10-16x help working families, keep children safe, and improve student learning. Research shows that the program works -- the Results-Based Accountability (RBA) scorecard prepared by the Department each year shows that they are reaching their targeted participants and making a difference in the lives of young people. Evaluation results of these grant-funded programs by the University of Connecticut demonstrate that program participants show significant CMT test score improvements in math and reading. The state-funded After School Grant Program would be a worthwhile investment of our tax dollars and deserves substantially more funding, not less.

The After School Grant program is making a significant difference in changing the ways communities and schools work together. President Obama said "The time has come for America to rethink how, where, and when our young people learn." This was echoed by the Connecticut Association of School Superintendents' *NextEd* Report last year when it recommended that Connecticut "redefine the use of time in order to support a personalized learning system; make achievement the constant and time the variable. Allow students to learn anytime, anywhere."

After school programs are also one of the best tools in the state's arsenal for combatting the persistent achievement gap between high-income and low-income students. A forthcoming national study that clearly shows that income differences in math achievement were eliminated for students who had consistent after-school activities across grades K-5.

## After School Program Facts:

- The After School Grant Program serves more than **5,000 kids** grades K-12 at 61 sites in **27 cities and towns** across Connecticut, from small rural communities to the state's largest cities.
- The average program serves **120 students**, many serving more than one site in their community, at a cost to the state of less than **\$1,000 per student** or about **\$10 per day**.